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Honorable Lester L. Wolff  
Chairman, Select Committee on  
Narcotics Abuse and Control  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have received your letter of October 15th, as well as the one from Mr. Flott, the Select Committee's Counselor for International Affairs of the same date, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to provide you and your colleagues with additional details of the Agency's role in support of our government's efforts to stem the flow of illicit narcotics from abroad. I trust you will understand that my answers to the questions in both letters must be treated as classified information, and I am therefore making a single response and sending it to you via Mr. Flott in accord with your suggestion. I wish my response could be unclassified because I take considerable pride in the Agency's role with regard to obtaining necessary narcotics-related foreign intelligence and wish the public could be made fully aware of the Agency's overall contribution. You are well aware, however, that the Agency is obligated both by law and prudence to protect its sources and methods, a dual obligation that must be fully respected if it is to continue to provide the informational support

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expected by the Congress and the Administration.

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Let me first address myself to the questions as they were posed in your letter.

A. From the hearings:

1. The Agency is providing (and has provided) considerable foreign intelligence and related support to the DEA, Bureau of Customs and other agencies to improve their collection, processing, storage and recovery practices. There is a regular flow of information reports to all these agencies which is supplemented by almost daily discussions between Agency and counterpart officers in these other agencies. These exchanges take place both in the Washington area and in our Missions overseas. I believe the transmittal of skills, as your letter suggested, is being carried out by these exchanges.

There are practical limitations, however, as to how far such a transmittal can be carried out in view of the fact that the DEA and Bureau of Customs are domestic enforcement agencies. I do not believe it proper, for example, that officers of this Agency directly train DEA or Customs officers in the techniques of foreign intelligence operations and related skills. This would be a clear impropriety. I have been advised, furthermore, that the Department of Justice concurs with this opinion, having indicated to my staff that any Agency involvement in training of DEA officers should be limited to discussions or briefings of its role in the government's international narcotics control programs

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for their better understanding of what we do, what we can and can not do to support them.

2. With regard to the second question as to whether the Agency might supply more foreign narcotics-related intelligence to policy makers, I believe the answer is yes, but with conditions. These conditions are the practical realities of available resources (human and material) which must be allocated to meet all the information requirements levied on the Agency. International narcotics is a priority target for the Agency, and I believe we are making a very substantial contribution to our government's overall requirements. At the same time, however, we are facing budgetary limitations and manpower ceilings, both of which have become increasingly stringent. The Agency must, therefore, work out a judicious balance of resource allocations to ensure it covers to the extent possible all the information priorities established by the government. You should be aware that in 1969 when the Agency first became formally involved in the government's international narcotics control efforts, the BNDD (DEA's predecessor) had approximately  persons assigned abroad. Today the DEA has an overseas staffing authorization of some  I believe you will agree that the Agency's allocation of resources must take this expansion of DEA's foreign operational capability into account on practical grounds.

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The second part of your question asked if the Agency might be able to detail some persons to other agencies. Again, I must point out that it would be an impropriety, at the least, for CIA personnel to be assigned for full-time duty at a domestic enforcement agency such as the DEA or Bureau of Customs. In addition, in view of our manpower limitations, I am not persuaded it would be the most effective use of CIA personnel to employ them in such a manner.

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B. Questions apart from the hearings:



2. This Agency also reported information some time ago of another incident concerning the flight of a Thai helicopter into Burma. The only specific information known to this Agency related to an incident

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in \_\_\_\_\_, and there were no details that illicit narcotics had actually been moved by this helicopter. The Embassy in Bangkok made strong representations to the Thai Government at the time the information was reported, the demarche having been presented by the Ambassador himself to the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister. The Ambassador was assured that the Thai Government would take forceful action to stop such unauthorized activity.

3. I believe the new Thai Government is committed to suppressing the production and trafficking of illicit narcotics. The new Prime Minister, in his second public speech, made a strong policy statement committing his government to the suppression of illicit narcotics trafficking and other forms of corruption. This Agency has no specific information identifying Thai military officers linked with illegal drug traffic. As to whether the United States has more leverage with the new Thai Government, it is too early to make any assessment. From what we have seen or heard in terms of the new government's composition, I believe it would be safe to say the new Thai Government will cooperate with the United States with regard to the suppression of illicit international narcotics trafficking.

4. The Agency has a program to solicit the opinions of other agencies who receive foreign intelligence from it. This is a continual activity, carried

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on both in Washington and abroad to ensure that our collection and reporting will not be duplicative and will meet the needs of the other agencies involved.

D. Questions contained in Mr. Flott's letter:

Afghanistan:

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More than one-half of the world's

illicit opium is estimated to originate in the "Golden Triangle" of Southeast Asia.

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Similarly,

Mexico has been the source of almost all the heroin abused in the United States in recent years whereas almost all of the cocaine abused domestically originates in South America.

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main reason for this is that Pakistan and Afghanistan have not yet been identified as sources of opiates for domestic abuse;

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We are continually alert, however, for

possible changes in this situation and regularly consult with our colleagues in DEA and other agencies to ascertain whether we should increase our efforts in concert with theirs. If the eradication campaign in Mexico

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proves successful, it is not certain that Afghanistan (or Pakistan) would take its place as the source for American abusers. The information available to date indicates that most Afghan and Pakistani opiates are consumed locally, in India, in Iran (which has a huge addict population) or in Europe. The various factors affecting control programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan are of great concern to this Agency (and to all agencies concerned with international narcotics control) and strenuous efforts are currently underway by our government to help these two countries make necessary improvements despite the very real limitations of their respective authority in the remote areas of production.

Turkey: The case of the Turkish ship which was apprehended by Egyptian authorities with a cargo of illicit opium is still under investigation. The primary United States responsibility for action is being undertaken by DEA and our Embassy in Ankara. I believe the ship's captain is still under arrest and being interrogated. A sample of the seized opium has been provided to DEA for chemical analysis to ascertain its origin.

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Approved For Release 2006/01/03 : CIA-RDP79M00467A000400040005-9

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Mr. Chairman, I have not attempted to discuss in the fullest possible detail the very pertinent and useful questions that you and Mr. Flott have submitted in your letters to me. To do so would entail a tremendous amount of discussion which would necessarily include considerable speculation on my part in view of the many complexities and unknowns that are involved. I would suggest, therefore, that once you and the other Select Committee members have had the opportunity to review this letter, we arrange for another executive session in which my staff and I will be glad to respond to questions in the fullest detail possible.

I wish to reiterate the appreciation that Agency officers and I share to have this opportunity to acquaint the Select Committee with what the Agency is doing to support our Government's efforts to eliminate this terrible social evil afflicting our people.

Sincerely,

George Bush  
Director

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